

## **Understanding Bullying and How Parents Can Help**

You can probably remember being picked on or teased at some time during your middle school years. Generally speaking, it has been viewed as a part of growing up.

We live in world which is different than the one of your youth. Some of our children are the recipients of mean and unkind behaviors, intentional or unintentional.

BULLYING is defined as aggressive behavior that IS intentional, hurtful and repeated.

Parents and schools need to work together to prevent bullying. We need to:

- Teach skills to empower students
- Teach skills to cope with and manage conflict
- Encourage all to send the clear message that being mean/hurtful is UNACCEPTABLE

### **Types of Bullying**

1. Physical bullying is pushing, hitting, kicking another and/or damaging or stealing another's belongings
2. Verbal bullying is teasing, name-calling or making embarrassing comments at someone
3. Social bullying is spreading rumors, gossip to intentionally damage another's social acceptance
4. . Cyberbullying is using technology to intimidate, harass or embarrass another

## **What To Do If Your Child is a Target**

Listen to your child, support them and empower them to speak up when they are being mistreated.

Be proactive by monitoring internet use, cell use and texting. Keep your home computer in a common space such as the kitchen or family room.

Observe if your child shows these signs:

- More anxious, quiet or insecure
- Refusal to go to school or there is a decline in grades
- Appetite changes or complaints of not feeling well
- Withdrawn, sad, depressed, difficult to engage
- Asks for money
- Has unexplained injuries

When listening to your child, gather some facts about who was involved, number of incidents, types of incidents and location of incidents.

Share your concerns and the information that you heard from your child with school staff.